



May 1, 2018

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." – Dr. Seuss

Our students, faculty and staff move quickly and purposely across the UNT System, and hard work seems to make time go by in a snap. The academic calendar for the spring semester is winding down and commencement ceremonies are right around the corner. I've now been on the job for six months, and – with April now in the rearview mirror – I wanted to share an assortment of exciting events, milestones and collaborations from last month.

On April 5 I was honored to deliver a keynote address to an audience of several hundred as part of the [Dallas Regional Chamber's \(DRC\) annual Higher Education luncheon](#). I opened my speech with our now award-winning (more on that later) "Together We" video, and highlighted how the UNT System impacts greater Dallas-Fort Worth and Texas as a whole through a broad offering of degree programs, a commitment to grow research, and support of the business community with a pipeline of talented, work-ready graduates. I also shared my own personal journey as a first-generation college graduate and announced a new Chancellor's Scholarship Program for first-generation students of UNT, UNT Dallas and UNT Health Science Center.

President Mong provided closing remarks at the DRC luncheon and spoke on the importance of community collaboration for the greater good of the region we all serve. UNT Dallas was lauded for its efforts to provide educational access to a traditionally underserved population during the event.

Later that same day, I joined FOX 4 TV's Shannon Murray to launch a new podcast that is distributed via iTunes, YouTube, SoundCloud, and Spreaker. The podcast also can be found at [DallasInnovates.com](#). Titled *Bridging Gaps*, our monthly podcast will explore thought-provoking issues in DFW and Texas, with a focus on bringing partners and subject experts together in purposeful conversation for the greater good of the community.

You can listen to our first episode of *Bridging Gaps*, with special guest Eric Ban of the Dallas County Promise, here: [Bridging Gaps: Episode 1](#).

Last month I also had the pleasure of attending UNT Health Science Center's Research Appreciation Day in Fort Worth. Roughly 250 innovators presented posters at this annual celebration of the outstanding quality and range of research conducted at UNTHSC. I left the event feeling energized by our incredibly talented, bright and dedicated researchers.

I experienced similar feelings of pride when I visited Discovery Park for UNT's Biomedical Engineering Building groundbreaking ceremony, and heard from our Spring graduates in the first class of Biomedical Engineers. I toured Engineering with Provost Cowley and leaders of the UNT College of Engineering. We have so much exciting work underway in our Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Institute, in Computer Science, and in Electrical Engineering – so much so that I'll need to go back to tour the remaining Institutes. Incredible people – of all ages and backgrounds – make our UNT System so very special, and this event and subsequent tour provided another opportunity to witness true brilliance in action.

HIGH FIVES

UNT E-Sports Program Provides Glimpse at Future

President Smatresk is molding UNT into what he calls a "Next-Generation University" and that means pushing the edges of reality when it comes to research and innovation. As you might imagine, pushing the edges of reality resonates with my NASA background, but UNT isn't just breaking new ground in the academic side of the house. E-Sports is a growing industry in America, and UNT is at the forefront of this multimedia phenomenon, with an emerging new varsity program for top gamers. [Read more in the Dallas Observer.](#)

UNT is also gaining recognition for its innovation in business operations by the Southern Association of College and University Business Officers. As part of a multi-faceted partnership with Toyota, UNT has improved business processes and efficiency -- an initiative that has been recognized as a finalist for a Best Practice Award to be presented at SACUBO's Annual Meeting next month, with a chance to take home top honors.

UNT Dallas Foundation and State Rep. Helen Giddings

The movement to bring more women into local, state and national leadership roles took a major leap forward last weekend when the UNT Dallas Foundation and State Rep. Helen Giddings hosted the sold-out inaugural Women's Leadership Summit in Dallas. The summit's purpose in part was to have current female leaders be available to and stand as examples for black women who want to become the next generation of leaders. [Read more in the Dallas Morning News.](#)

UNTHSC Holds Missing Persons Event

There are about 1,100 missing person cases in Texas and an event last Sunday at UNT Health Science Center was created to help families take steps to solve them. Family members of missing persons came from far and wide to share items such as police reports, X-rays, dental information, fingerprint records, and other documents related to their missing loved one for entry into the UNTHSC's National Missing and Unidentified Persons System database. [Learn more from NBC 5.](#)

#TogetherWe Wins Gold

During the February Board Meeting I shared my "rallying cry" for the UNT System with the launch of a video series titled #TogetherWe. The video highlights how UNT, UNT Dallas and UNT Health Science – together – are changing the world. The making of the video itself was a textbook example of successful cross-institutional collaboration within our UNT System. Talented team members from each of our UNT System institutions made contributions to the video which earned Gold honors at the 2018 Hermes Creative Awards, administered and judged by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals. [Read more at UNTSystem.edu.](#)

Record Participation in the Gallup Survey

This spring, the faculty and staff at each of our institutions and the UNT System had an opportunity to share about their experience working within the UNT System via the Gallup Employee Engagement Survey. Record numbers of faculty and staff participated in this survey, which we will use as a benchmarking tool to gauge and improve engagement at each of our campuses. You'll hear more about the Gallup survey results in the coming weeks.

GALLUP PARTICIPATION		
	2017	2018
UNT	49%	71%
UNT DALLAS	60%	48%
UNTHSC	76%	83%
UNT SYSTEM	86%	92%

LOOKING AHEAD

Last week we announced the retirement of Chief Human Capital Officer Luis Lewin. Brandi Renton, University of North Texas Associate Vice President for Administrative Services,

has assumed the role of Interim Chief Human Capital Officer for the UNT System. Brandi began serving the UNT System as Acting Associate Vice Chancellor for Human Resources in February and has been doing a great job. She'll keep us moving in the right direction while we conduct a national search for this very important leadership position.

James Maguire, UNT System Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning & Construction, is also retiring. Congratulations to James on a tremendous career in which he helped shape campuses not just in North Texas, but also in California and Idaho. Cassandra Nash, Associate Vice Chancellor for Facilities Design & Construction, will assume the role of Interim Vice Chancellor on June 1. We'll similarly conduct a national search for this leadership position.

Of course May means commencement ceremonies across our System and those details can be found at the following links:

[UNT Commencement](#)

[UNT Dallas Commencement](#)

[UNT Health Science Center Commencement](#)

This month we will also hold our quarterly UNT System Board of Regents meetings on May 17-18 at our downtown Dallas headquarters.

Please encourage our students as they head into finals ... they are the lifeblood of the UNT System!



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